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Cover Page Footnote

This article is the edited transcription of a presentation made at the University of Massachusetts at Boston on March 11, 1986.

be. But it has changed for the worse in some ways. In 1963, in the Fall—this was after the March in Washington—public opinion polls showed that more than 75 percent of the American people wanted strong, new civil rights legislation with teeth in it and wanted to see it enforced. This was white, black, north, south, east, west. They were on our side; we couldn't lose. We had to win; we had won already because we had swung public opinion to our side.

But public opinion changed. The back-lash began developing in the middle '60's. Oh, people were frightened by Black Power, talk of revolution, by publicity of inner-city crime, muggings, rapes and murders. They were frightened by political capital made of the busing issue and of the welfare chiselers issue; they were frightened by the summer riots and the riots in the wake of Dr. King's assassination. Those of lower middle classes were frightened because there was job training for unskilled blacks and Hispanics and Native Americans with modern techniques and modern equipment, and they feared they were being trained for their jobs and they thought their jobs would be in jeopardy and the gains which they had made, they thought might be lost. Those who have one foot up

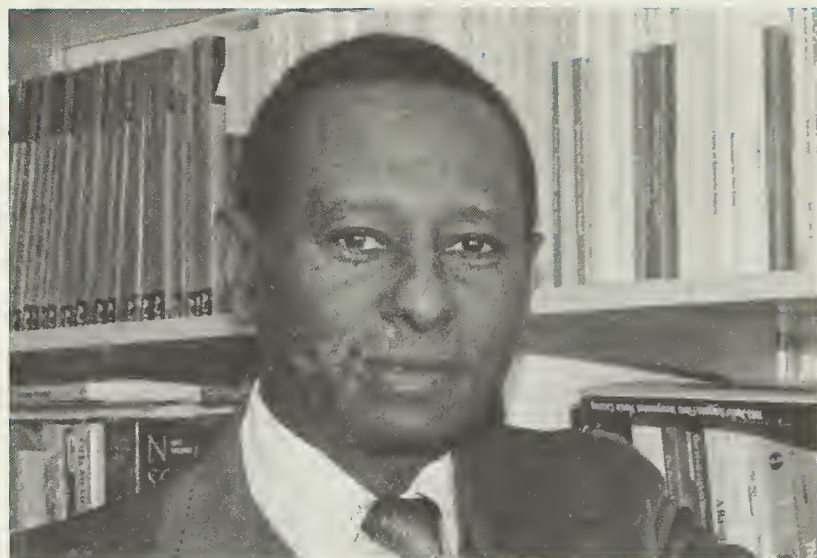
the ladder are terrified when there is motion from below them. So it changed. By the middle '70's, public opinion polls showed that the majority of the American people felt, first, that there was no longer any systemic racial discrimination except in reverse, and second, that blacks had moved too far too fast, had gotten too much too fast. In the '60's we were victims and popular. Nobody would have dared have a cocktail party without having at least one of us there. We were a very popular people then. But in the '70's and into the '80's, we were viewed more as victimizers, not as victims. We were victims before, victims of oppression—long suffering, now victimizers. We have to change that around. We are going to need the alliance, the friendship, the coalition, the help of all of those of goodwill. If I may close with the words of Hillel, a Rabbi of 2,000 years ago: "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am for myself alone what am I? And if not now, when?"

From a speech by Mr. Farmer at the University of Massachusetts at Boston on March 5, 1986, in the William Monroe Trotter Institute Distinguished Lecture Series on affirmative action.

The Economic Status of Blacks in Boston

by
James E. Blackwell

In recent years, special attention has been given to problems of racism in Boston. Without question, highly publicized steps have been taken by civic, business, religious, and neighborhood groups to combat racism, bigotry and discrimination. Frequently, these initiatives have also been supported by municipal and state governments or administrations. Strategies for improving the racial climate in Boston, initiated by the Covenant for Racial Justice, the Boston Committee, the Coalition for a Better Boston, and now, the newly created PARTNERSHIP, as well as some pronouncements of the (Mayor) Flynn and (Governor) Dukakis administrations must be applauded. However, despite such courses of actions, there is convincing evidence to support the contention that the roots of racial and ethnic discrimination have not been fully addressed. Further, there exists a telling discontinuity between rhetoric and demonstrated success in alleviating the basic problems of racial discord and race-based exclusion from the social and economic infrastructure of the Boston community.



In the monograph, *The Emerging Black Community of Boston*,¹ I focused on structural barriers and conditions which either accelerate or impede access and upward mobility of blacks in the occupational structure. This work offered a description of the general economic conditions and status of blacks in Boston at mid-1985. The theoretical underpinnings of the paper were sociological, social-psychological and economic interpretations of prejudice and discrimination in the marketplace. Trend data on the character of that discrimination, the underrepresentation of blacks in public and private sector employment, poverty, unemployment, and income—all were obtained from a variety of sources. The trend data covered a period from 1979 to mid-1985. Since the publication of this document, I have examined additional data, some of which were generated by the Flynn Administration.

My conclusions remain unchanged! Despite the enormous economic boom currently experienced by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the City of Boston, and despite some improvements in their status, *blacks and*

other minorities have not shared equally and fully in this recovery. The unemployment rate among blacks is still twice that of whites. The teenage unemployment rate among blacks and Hispanics is more than triple that of whites. Poverty is widespread in the black and Latino communities. In city-controlled jobs, despite the existence of a Boston Residency Jobs Ordinance, blacks and Hispanics continue to be concentrated in the lower-paying entry level jobs. There is a white monopoly on higher-paying executive, managerial, and officer positions in the city and state-controlled jobs as well as in the private sector. The Executive Ordinance issued in July 1985 which extends the requirements of the Boston Residency Jobs Ordinance to the private sector has not been enforced. No plan for its implementation has been publicized. No affirmative action policy has been either implemented or publicized. And, as the Boston Redevelopment Authority stated in a report issued last year, "in Boston, there is poverty amidst affluence." Much, much more has to be done to translate rhetoric and "good will" into concrete action that will alleviate the untoward economic conditions of the outsider groups in Boston.

Evidence to Support These Conclusions?

Reports from the Boston Redevelopment Authority show that since 1976 Boston has experienced a major construction boom. Reports from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts show that the State has been privileged with unparalleled economic growth. As a result of this economic expansion, the State could boast in February 1986 of a 3.7 percent unemployment rate, tied with New Hampshire for the lowest unemployment rate in the nation. The Governor of the Commonwealth claims that this recovery is so magnificent and pervasive that it may be necessary for Massachusetts to import workers in order to meet job needs within the State.

Ganz and Perkins,² writing for the Boston Redevelopment Authority and, by definition, the City of Boston, stated that the "structural transformation" of the city's economy has meant a movement away from large scale manufacturing and wholesale trade to service activities, particularly in communications, business and professional services, higher education and other related areas. They reported in 1985 that Boston experienced a net gain of 77,000 jobs between 1976 and 1984. These jobs were distributed principally as follows: 14,000 in business and professional services; 17,000 in higher education and medicine; 15,000 in finances; 7,000 in communications; 7,500 in retail trade, and 2,500 in the hotel industry. Many areas of net gain are precisely the areas in which the participation rate of blacks and other minorities is much lower than warranted.

Further, some 18,000 new jobs were created in Boston in 1984 and another 10,000 were created in 1985. It is projected that between 1985 and 1995, some *100,000 new jobs* will be created in the city of Boston alone. A significant proportion of jobs generated since 1976, as well as those projected for the future, are in the downtown area in which blacks and other residents of Boston, white and

non-black minorities, have less than a fair chance of employment. A considerable proportion of the 100,000 new jobs will be generated by "a projected \$6.2 billion in new construction."³ Of that sum, \$2.7 billion will be realized from development projects now underway and which are scheduled for completion between 1985 and 1988. These projections include a gain of 56,000 office jobs; 15,500 manufacturing jobs; 5,400 hotel jobs, and 9,000 retail trade jobs. The ten "downtown development projects" alone will result in 13,843 construction jobs and 24,735 permanent jobs. However, these are private development enterprises. The employment record of these firms with respect to blacks, Hispanics, Asians and Boston residents is atrocious.

According to data collected during my interviews, there is not now — and never has been — a single black construction firm involved in any aspect of the downtown construction projects. Blacks were not involved anywhere in the re-development of Fanueil Hall and Quincy Market. Labor unions continue to be anti-black, and often anti-city residents, with respect to permitting access to their apprenticeship training programs and, of course, in their hiring practices. As a result of these situations, it is estimated by city officials that only 35 percent of jobs in Boston are held by Boston residents. It is also estimated that between 75 and 80 percent of all downtown jobs with salaries in excess of \$15,000 per year are held by non-Boston residents. Is there any wonder, then, that Boston has one of the highest poverty rates of any city in the nation?

Further evidence of the assertion that blacks have not shared fully in the economic boom in Boston and of the persistence of discrimination and racial exclusion in the market place comes from such areas as investigative reporters (e.g. the Pulitzer Prize winning group from the Boston Globe), data generated from the Regional Office of the Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and an examination of data generated by the City of Boston and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. These data often demonstrate trends, changes, or stability over a specific time period, from 1972 to 1985. These data consistently reveal pervasive underutilization of blacks, and the effects of prejudice and white preference in the marketplace. This is true, whether we focus on city and state-controlled jobs or in the private sector. The results are uniform when we examine the full range of occupational positions: from the chief executive officers, the executive officers, managers, administrators, sales clerks, professionals, technicians, clerical workers, to crafts workers, and in some areas, the service workers. *There is clearly a white preference, not an equality of opportunity for jobs in Boston.* This finding holds in every type of institution, business enterprise, and organization in the city. It is true for the newspapers, banking institutions, colleges and universities, insurance companies, printing companies, high technology firms, communications, general merchandise stores, food stores, hotels, and restaurants. The statistical data presented in my report¹ reveal the pervasiveness of minority underrepresentation and white preference in all of these areas.

Employment in Municipal Government

There is no reason to deny the fact that under the Flynn Administration improvements have been made toward addressing some of the critical issues of unemployment, income inequities, lack of access to city-controlled jobs, and poverty. The same must be said, and has been reported, with respect to the *second* Dukakis Administration. At the same time, it is equally imperative to recognize the immense disparity between rhetoric and concrete action. It is concrete action, not rhetoric, which results in meaningful social change and economic empowerment for the outsider groups. I wish to focus specific attention now on two areas of employment with city government: (1) total work force and (2) new hires. Then, some attention will be given to the race variable in the distribution of state-controlled jobs.

The data reported in my chapter in *The Emerging Black Community in Boston* represented May 1985 findings on total city employment by income and race.¹ It showed that the underutilization of blacks is widespread throughout city government. It also showed that the severity of the problem varies by department. Nevertheless, it was quite evident that the white monopoly of certain jobs was more manifest in twelve departments or divisions, including the Retirement Board, Administrative Service, Inspectional Services, City Clerk's Office, Treasury Department, Election Department, Finance Commission, Law Department, Real Property Department, Environmental Department, the Court House Commission and the Registry of Deeds. The city's own data also showed that one-third of all persons earning between \$6,000 and \$9,999 were black; approximately one-fourth of those earning between \$10,000 and \$12,000 were black. However, 96 percent of all persons with incomes in excess of \$33,000 per year were white, and the data showed that at all levels between \$13,000 and \$29,000 in annual incomes, more than 80 percent were white. These data did not include the 3,000 employees in Health and Hospitals. When they are included, the evidence shows that in 1985 about 40 percent of all Health and Hospital employees were black and/or Hispanic. However, these two groups comprise 93 percent of all the workers in the two lowest pay categories, while whites comprise 90 percent of all persons holding upper echelon jobs.

Recently, I made a comparison of income distributions by race among the total work force of the city government for the fourth quarter of 1984 and the fourth quarter of 1985. This analysis does, indeed, confirm increasing access to city-controlled jobs by blacks and minorities. Much more should be said about these reports. By the end of the fourth quarter in 1984, minorities represented 17.87 percent of the total work force. This percentage rose to 19.46 percent at the end of 1985. During the same period, the percent black in the total work force rose from 14.35 to 15.2 percent, or slightly less than one full percent in the aggregate. Further, this analysis reveals that the higher the income level, the greater is the white monopoly, and greater is the underrepresentation of blacks, Hispanics and Asians.

In 1985, blacks comprised 12.1 percent of persons earning under \$6,000 per year; 36.8 percent of those earning between \$6,000 and \$9,999 (below poverty level wages); 24.1 percent of those earning between \$10,000 and 12,999 (at the poverty level); about 15 percent of those earning between \$16,000 and 29,999; but only about 3 percent of those with earnings in excess of \$30,000. As in 1984, whites in 1985 held about 96 percent of all the managerial and executive level jobs in city government.

I also made a similar analysis of "new hires" in city government, utilizing city-generated data. The period of comparison is the fourth quarter of 1984 with the fourth quarter of 1985. (See Table 1.)

Table 1

Percent Minority By Income for
City Government Work Force: 1984 and 1985

Income	Percent Minority			Direction of Change
	1984	(Minority/ Blacks)	1985	
Less than 6,000	64.44	(-/-)	59.18	-
6,000- 9,999	42.86	(-/-)	37.50	-
10,000-12,999	26.32	(-/-)	28.89	+
13,000-15,999	12.00	(3/3)	15.63	+
16,000-19,999	50.00	(9/9)	13.04	-
20,000-24,999	46.03	(25/25)	41.67	-
25,000-29,999	40.00	(2/2)	14.29	-
30,000-32,999	0.00	(-/-)	0.00	-
33,000-over	20.00	(1/1)	0.00	-

Note: In 1985 (4th Qtr), 88 minorities (incl. 61 blacks) were hired. However, 69 of that 88, or 78.3 percent, were hired in jobs which paid less than \$16,000 per year, and 64 or 72 percent, were hired in jobs that paid less than \$13,000 per year, which is about the poverty level in Boston.

Unmistakably, the city is hiring more blacks. The problem is that they are hired in entry-level positions which result in low wages. In turn, they are confronted with enormous problems of inadequate housing, maintaining an acceptable living standard, and difficulties in supporting a family.

Employment in State-Controlled Jobs

The Massachusetts State Office of Affirmative Action reported in 1984 that blacks held 8.36 percent of the statewide work force of 92,310 persons. The percent minority in the state's work force rose from 7 to 11 percent between 1980 and 1984. In 1984, blacks and other minorities were unevenly distributed with respect to job categories as well as among the fifteen Secretariats of State Government. Black males represented 3.4 percent of the officials and administrators, 1.3 percent of the professionals, 2.7 percent of the technicians, 3.5 percent of the skilled craft positions and 9.5 percent of all lower-paying positions. Black females constituted 3.0 percent of the officials and administrators, 2.8 percent of the professionals, 5.8 percent of the technicians, 9 percent of persons holding clerical positions, and 0.4 percent of the skilled crafts positions. Black women also comprised 3.4 percent of the 12,725 workers classified in lower-paying positions.

Not only is there an underutilization of blacks by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, but there is a significant shortage of black males in such positions. Within the fifteen Secretariats of State Government, blacks comprise 3.4 and 3.0 percent for males and females, respectively. Among this group, blacks are more likely to be employed in Higher Education, Human Services and in the Economic and Manpower Secretariat than among other secretariats. However, in higher education, blacks hold only 2.8 percent of the faculty positions; and there are several state colleges without a single black faculty member, including Framingham State College, Greenfield Community College, Massachusetts Maritime Academy, Middlesex College and Quinsigamond Community College. The highest percentage of black and minority faculty among all state-supported institutions is found at the University of Massachusetts at Boston which reported a 6.8 percent representation. Private institutions do not fare as well as public institutions in the recruitment, hiring and promotion of black and other minority faculty members.

Most colleges and universities in Massachusetts have a shameful record with respect to the recruitment and hiring of blacks and other minorities. Some departments within these institutions have never employed a single black person.

Consequences of the Employment Profile

The consequences of the employment profile described to this point are reflected in the extensive poverty rate of Boston. It is estimated by the Boston Redevelopment Authority that within five years, approximately 25 percent of all Bostonians will be in poverty. The national rate now is only about 15 percent. The BRA also reports that in 1985, some 44 percent of Boston's population is low income — that is, "earning no more than twice the poverty level" (of \$10,609 for a family of four). A significant proportion of the low-income population in Boston is found in the black and Hispanic populations. When one compares employment, income, and unemployment across neighborhood lines, immediately observable is the fact of high concentrations of the unemployed, under-employed, and low-income in those neighborhoods populated by minority groups. So, when the Governor speaks of the need to import workers, we may wish to ask him to take a ride on the Orange Line, the Red Line, and walk through the neighborhoods of Roxbury, Dorchester, South Boston and East Boston and talk to people out of work but who would relish employment by the city, state or private sector.

What Can Be Done?

We are cognizant of a number of initiatives already implemented for the alleviation of some of these problems. The Governor's Executive Search Program, and his Executive Orders 235, 236, and 246 as well as rigorous monitoring of discriminatory practices by the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination are important

beginnings. But much more must be done. At the municipal level, the promulgation of the Boston Residency Jobs Ordinance in 1983, its extension by an Executive Order in July 1985, and the establishment of a Municipal Office of Affirmative Action are equally positive signs.

We may also applaud efforts to address teenage unemployment through programs such as Boston Works, the Boston Compact, the Private Industry Council, and the special efforts of organizations such as the Urban League, Action for Boston Community, the Job Corps, and Jobs for Youth.

However, major problems persist. It is their existence in 1986 which underlie the disparity between good intention rhetoric and actual implementation of strategies to eliminate economic inequities between the races. To be specific: while it is true that the public sector has a better track record for overall employment than does the private sector, the fact remains that blacks and other minorities are more likely to be hired in lower level jobs or on the secondary tier of a split labor market. The Boston Residency Jobs Ordinance has, indeed, brought many jobs to the target groups. However, a look at Copley Place is instructive, for it reaffirms the position of unequal distribution of blacks and other minorities throughout the work force. Further, neither the Ordinance nor its Executive extension to the private sector has been rigorously enforced. According to reports obtained for this presentation, there are still no enforcement mechanisms in place; there are no sanctions and no penalties in place for those persons who do not meet hiring policies. There is no money allocated for enforcement and compliance. There are no blacks doing business in Fanueil Hall and Quincy Market. McDonalds in Lafayette Place is the only franchise operated by a black person in downtown Boston. There does not appear to be a firm monitoring policy for the enforcement of the residency requirements. Blacks still do not have access to union-controlled jobs because of the historic patterns of exclusion found among unions.

Why Sanctions Are Needed

1. Sanctions are costs. A cost for discrimination prevents some people from actualizing prejudiced attitudes into overt discriminatory behavior. If sanctions are high or detrimental to the economic or social well-being of the discriminator, discrimination may be lessened.
2. If discriminators sense that anti-discriminatory policies are not likely to be enforced, there is no perceived cost for discrimination. Discrimination is likely to continue.
3. Effectiveness of public policy designed to correct social and economic inequality requires leverage used in creative ways.

The City still has not effectively used its leverage to persuade compliance to affirmative action in procurement or purchasing; nor has it used its leverage with respect to zoning restrictions and demanding escrows for developers that do not have a record of compliance.

It seems to me that a coherent policy strategy combines the kinds of projections for job creation with an effective training and recruitment program to be simultaneously implemented. Training programs begin in family attitudes toward schooling and preparation for work, and re-socialization of young people for the requirements of the world of work—language, attitudes, presentation of self, inter-personal relationships, punctuality, and so on. It demands quality schooling and an interesting and stimulating learning environment so as to stem the horrendous drop-out rate among blacks and Hispanics. It means communication and liaison between colleges and school systems to create an awareness of market needs so that young people will prepare themselves for the kinds of positions that are available and will be created in the near future. It requires a re-examination of admissions policies and practices and a new assessment of institutional environments to make learning itself more attractive and meaningful. Clearly, commitment to the goal of eco-

nomie equity and the elimination of inequities will require all of this and more. It can be done. It must be done.

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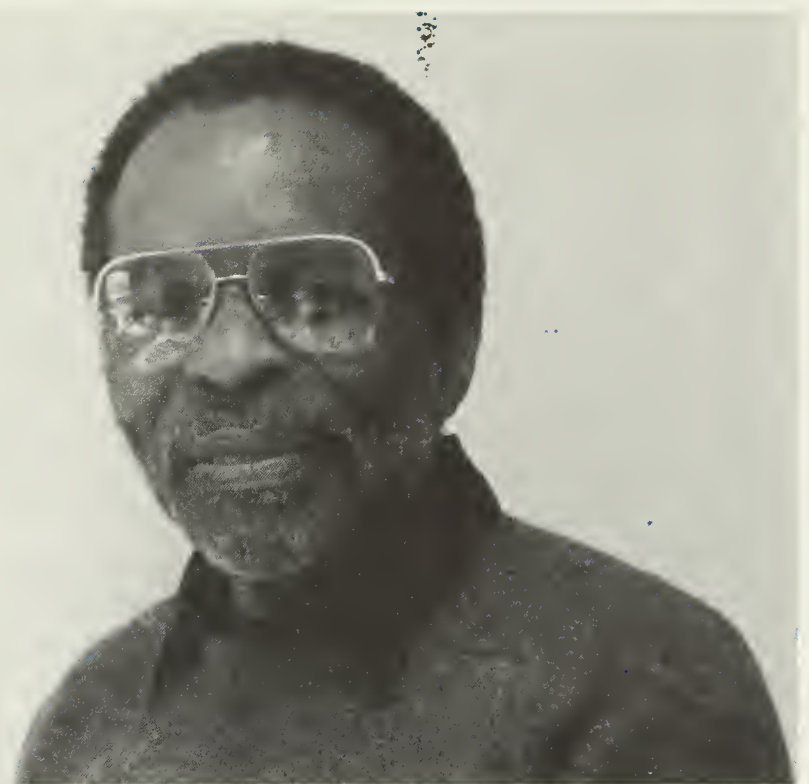
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Some Observations on Closing The Gap

by
Jeremiah P. Cotton



James P. Smith and Finis R. Welch, along with fellow economist Richard B. Freeman, have been primarily responsible for the much accepted notion that there have been “dramatic” advances in the economic situation of blacks in the recent past. *Closing The Gap: 40 Years of Economic Progress for Blacks* (CTG)¹ is just the latest installment and reworking of this optimism. Freeman attributed the alleged progress to a “collapse” of labor market discrimination caused by “governmental and related antidiscrimination activity associated with the 1964 Civil Rights Act.”² Smith and Welch (hereinafter S&W), on the other hand, have always been somewhat agnostic about the efficacy of affirmative action. Instead, they have consistently sought to show that the longrun progress they claim for blacks has been due to two major factors: the improvement in the quantity and quality of black education and the great North to South, rural to urban, migration undertaken by blacks during the 1940's, 50's and 60's.

They concede that there have been other developments during subperiods of the 1940-80 period that may have had some short term effects on black progress and examine three of them. The first is the revolution of Southern agriculture following the introduction of the mechanical cotton picker and other technologies. The second is the decline in black male labor force participation, and the third, of course, is affirmative action.

Although Freeman and S&W were not entirely agreed on the causes of black progress, they were as one on the fact of it. In *CTG*, S&W present evidence indicating that the black male average weekly wage as a percent of the white male wage increased significantly between 1940 and 1980. “(In 1940) the typical black male worker earned only 43 percent as much as his white counterpart. By 1980, the average black man in the labor force earned 73 percent as much as the typical white man.” This increase in weekly wages was spread across all work experience